CATO MAJOR

OF

OLD AGE.

A

POEM.

By the Honourable

Sir *JOHN DENHAM*,

Knight of the *Bath*.

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CHARLES CLARK,
18—TOTHAM—62.

To the READER.

I Can neither call this Piece *Tully's*, nor my own, being much altered from the Original, not only by the change of the Style, but by Addition and Subſtraction. I believe you will be better pleas'd, to receive it, as I did, at the firſt ſight; for to me *Cicero* did not ſo much appear to write, as *Cato* to ſpeak; and to do right to my Author, I believe no Character of any Perſon was ever better drawn to the Life than this. Therefore neither conſider *Cicero*, nor Me, but *Cato* himſelf, who being then rais'd from the Dead to ſpeak the Language of that Age and Place; neither the diſtance of Place or Time makes it leſs poſſible to raiſe him now to ſpeak ours.

Though I dare not compare my Copy with the Original, yet you will find it mention'd here, how much Fruits are improv'd by Grafting; and here, by grafting Verſe upon Proſe, ſome of theſe ſeverer Arguments may receive a more mild and pleaſing Taſte.

Cato ſays (in another Place) of himſelf, that he learn'd to ſpeak *Greek* between the Seventieth and Eightieth Year of his Age, beginning that ſo late, he may not yet be too old to learn *Engliſh*, being now between his Seventeenth and Eighteenth Hundred Year. For theſe Reaſons I ſhall leave to this Piece no other Name than what the Author gave it of

Cato Major.

The PREFACE.

THAT Learned Critick, the younger Scaliger *comparing the two great Orators, ſays, that nothing can be taken from* Demoſthenes, *nor added to* Tully; *and if there be any Fault in the laſt, it is the Reſumption, or dwelling too long upon his Arguments: For which reaſon having intended to Tranſlate this Piece into Proſe, (where Tranſlation ought to be ſtrict) finding the Matter very proper for Verſe, I took the Liberty, to leave out what was only neceſſary to that Age, and Place, and to take, or add what was proper to this preſent Age, and Occaſion; by laying his Senſe cloſer, and in fewer words, according to the Style and Ear of theſe Times. The Three firſt Parts I dedicate to my old Friends, to take off thoſe melancholy Reflections, which the Senſe of Age, Infirmity, and Death may give them. The laſt part I think neceſſary for the Conviction of thoſe many, who believe not, or at leaſt mind not the Immortality of the Soul, of which the Scripture ſpeaks only poſitively, as a Lawgiver, with an* Ipſe dixit; *but it may be, they neither believe that (from which they either make Doubts, or Sport) nor thoſe, whoſe Buſineſs it is to interpret it, ſuppoſing they do it only for their own Ends: But If a Heathen Philoſopher bring ſuch Arguments from Reaſon, Nature, and Second Cauſes, which none of our Atheiſtical Sophiſters can confute, if they may ſtand convinced, that there is an Immortality of the Soul, I hope they will ſo weigh the Conſequences, as neither to talk, nor live as if there were no ſuch Thing.*

O F

OF
Old-Age.

Cato, Scipio, Lælius.

Scipio to *Cato.*

THOUGH all the Actions of your Life are crown'd
With Wiſdom, nothing makes them more renown'd,
Than that thoſe Years, which others think extream,
Nor to your ſelf, nor us uneaſy ſeem;
Under which Weight, moſt like th'old Giants groan,
When *Ætna* on their Backs by *Jove* was thrown.
Cato. What you urge (*Scipio*) from right Reaſon flows,
All parts of Age ſeem burthenſome to thoſe,
Who Virtue's, and true Wiſdom's Happineſs
Cannot diſcern, but they who thoſe poſſeſs,
In what's impos'd by Nature, find no Grief,
Of which our Age is (next our Death) the chief;
Which tho' all equally deſire to obtain,
Yet *when they have obtain'd it*, they complain:
Such our Inconſtancies, and Follies are,
We ſay it ſteals upon us unaware.
Our want of reaſ'ning theſe falſe Meaſures makes,
Youth runs to Age, as Childhood Youth o'ertakes;
How much more grievous would our Lives appear,
To reach th'Eight hundredth, than the Eightieth Year?

Of what, in that long ſpace of Time hath paſt,
To fooliſh Age will no Remembrance laſt:
My Age's Conduct when you ſeem t'admire,
(Which that it may deſerve, I much deſire)
'Tis my firſt Rule, on Nature, as my Guide,
Appointed by the Gods, I have rely'd;
And Nature (which all Acts of Life deſigns)
Not like ill Poets, in the laſt declines;
But ſome one part muſt be the laſt of all,
Which like ripe Fruits, muſt either rot, or fall;
And this from Nature muſt be gently born,
Elſe her (as Giants did the Gods) we ſcorn.
Læl. But, Sir, 'tis *Scipio's*, and my Deſire,
Since too long Life we gladly would Aſpire,
That from your grave Inſtructions we might hear,
How we, like you, might this great Burthen bear.
Cato. This I reſolv'd before, but now ſhall do,
With great delight, ſince 'tis requir'd by you.
Læl. If to your ſelf it will not tedious prove,
Nothing in us a greater Joy can move;
That as old Travellers the young Inſtruct,
Your long, our ſhort Experience may Conduct.
Cato. 'Tis true, (as the old Proverb doth relate)
Equals with Equals often congregate.
Two * Conſuls (who in Years my Equals were)
When Senators, lamenting I did hear,
That Age from them had all their Pleaſures torn,
And them their former Suppliants now ſcorn;
They, what is not to be accus'd, accuſe,
Not others, but themſelves their Age abuſe,
Elſe this might me concern, and all my Friends,
Whoſe cheerful Age, with Honour, Youth attends;
Joy'd that from Pleaſure's Slavery they are free,
And all Reſpects due to their Age they ſee,
In its true Colours, this Complaint appears,
The ill effect of Manners, not of Years;

* *Caius Salinator, Spurius Albinus.*

15 66 DEC

For on their Life no grievous Burthen lies,
Who are well-natur'd, temperate, and wise:
But an inhuman, and ill-temper'd Mind
Not any easy part in Life can find.
Læl. This I believe, yet others may dispute,
Their Age (as yours) can never bear such Fruit,
Of Honour, Wealth, and Power, to make them sweet,
Not every one such Happiness can meet.
Cato. Some weight your Argument (my *Lælius*) bears,
But not so much, as at first sight appears;
This Answer by *Themistocles* was made,
(When a *Seraphian* thus did him upbraid,
You those great Honours to your Country owe,
Not to your self) had I at **Seripho*
Been born, such Honour I had never seen,
Nor you, if an *Athenian* you had been:
So Age, cloath'd in undecent Poverty,
To the most Prudent cannot easy be;
But to a Fool, the greater his Estate,
The more uneasy is his Age's Weight.
Age's chief Arts, and Arms, are to grow wise,
Virtue to know, and known to exercise,
All just Returns to Age then Virtue makes,
Nor her in her Extremity forsakes;
The sweetest Cordial we receive at last,
Is Conscience of our Virtuous Actions past.
I (when a Youth) with Reverence did look
On *Quintius Fabius*, who *Tarentum* took;
Yet in his Age such cheerfulness was seen,
As if his Years and mine had equal been:
His Gravity was mix'd with Gentleness,
Nor had his Age made his good Humour less;
Then was he well in Years (the same that he
Was Consul, that of my Nativity)
(A Stripling then) in his Fourth Consulate
On him at *Capua* I in Arms did wait;

* An Isle to which condemn'd Men were Banish'd.

I five Years after at *Tarentum* wan
The Quæſtorſhip, and then our Love began;
And four Years after, when I Prætor was
He Pleaded, and the * *Cincian* Law did paſs.
With youthful Diligence he us'd to ingage,
Yet with the temperate Arts of patient Age,
He breaks fierce *Hannibal*'s inſulting Heats;
Of which Exploit, thus our Friend *Ennius* Treats,
He by Delay reſtor'd the Common-wealth,
Nor preferr'd Rumour before Publick Health.

* Againſt Bribes.

THE

The ARGUMENT.

When I reflect on Age, I find there are
Four Cauſes, which its Miſery declare.

1. *Becauſe our Bodies Strength it much impairs;*
2. *That it takes off our Minds from great Affairs;*
3. *Next, That our Senſe of Pleaſures it deprives;*
4. *Laſt, That approaching Death attends our Lives.*

Of all theſe ſeveral Cauſes I'll Diſcourſe,
And then of each, in Order, weigh the Force.

The FIRST PART.

1. THE Old from ſuch Affairs is only freed,
which vigorous Youth, and Strength of Body need.
But to more high Affairs our Age is lent,
Moſt properly when Heats of Youth are ſpent.
Did *Fabius*, and your Father *Scipio*
(Whoſe Daughter my Son married) nothing do?
Fabricii, *Coruncani*, *Curii*,
Whoſe Courage, Counſel, and Authority,
The *Roman* Common-wealth reſtor'd, did boaſt,
Nor *Appius*, with whoſe Strength his Sight was loſt,
Who when the Senate was to Peace inclin'd
With *Pyrrhus*, ſhew'd his Reaſon was not blind.
Whither's our Courage and our Wiſdom come?
When *Rome* it ſelf conſpires the Fate of *Rome*.
The reſt with ancient Gravity and Skill
He ſpake (for his Oration's extant ſtill)
'Tis Seventeen Years ſince he had Conſul been
The ſecond time, and there were Ten between;
Therefore their Argument's of little Force,
Who Age from great Imployments would Divorce.
As in a Ship ſome climb the Shrouds, t'unfold
The Sails, ſome ſweep the Deck, ſome pump the Hold;

Whil'ſt

Whil'ſt he that guides the Helm, imploys his Skill,
And gives the Law to them by ſitting ſtill.
Great Actions leſs from Courage, Strength, and Speed,
Than from wiſe Counſels and Commands proceed;
Thoſe Arts, Age wants not, which to Age belong,
Not heat, but cold Experience makes us ſtrong:
A Conſul, Tribune, General, I have been,
All ſorts of War I have paſt through, and ſeen;
And now grown Old, I ſeem t'abondon it,
Yet to the Senate I preſcribe what's fit.
I every day 'gainſt *Carthage* War proclaim,
(For *Rome*'s Deſtruction hath been long her Aim)
Nor ſhall I ceaſe till I her Ruin ſee,
Which Triumph may the Gods deſign for thee;
That *Scipio* may revenge his Grandſire's Ghoſt,
Whoſe Life at *Cannæ* with great Honour loſt,
Is on Record, nor had he wearied been
With Age, if he an Hundred Years had ſeen,
He had not us'd Excurſions, Spears, or Darts,
But Counſel, Order, and ſuch aged Arts;
Which, if our Anceſtors had not retain'd,
The *Senate*'s Name, our Council had not gain'd.
The *Spartans* to their higheſt Magiſtrate,
The Name of *Elder* did appropriate:
Therefore his Fame for ever ſhall remain,
How gallantly *Tarentum* he did gain,
With vigilant Conduct, when that ſharp Reply
He gave to *Salinator*, I ſtood by;
Who to the Caſtle fled, the Town being loſt,
Yet he to *Maximus* did vainly boaſt,
'Twas by my means *Tarentum* you obtain'd;
'Tis true, had you not loſt, I had not gain'd;
And as much Honour on his Gown did wait,
As on his Arms, in his Fifth Conſulate,
When his Colleague, *Carvilius* ſtept aſide,
The Tribune of the People would divide,
To them the *Gallick*, and the *Picene* Field,
Againſt the *Senate*'s Will, he will not yield;

Whe

When being Angry, boldly he declares
Thoſe things were acted under happy Stars,
From which the Common-wealth found good Effects,
But otherwiſe, they came from bad Aſpects.
Many great things of *Fabius* I could tell,
But his Son's Death did all the reſt excel;
(His Gallant Son, tho' young, had Conſul been)
His Funeral Oration I have ſeen
Often, and when on that I turn my Eyes,
I all the Old Philoſophers diſpiſe;
Though he in all the Peoples Eyes ſeem'd great,
Yet greater he appear'd in his Retreat;
When feaſting with his private Friends at Home;
Such Counſel, ſuch Diſcourſe from him did come;
Such Science in his Art of Augury,
No *Roman* ever was more learn'd than he;
Knowledge of all things preſent, and to come,
Rememb'ring all the Wars of ancient *Rome*,
Nor only thoſe, but all the World's beſide;
Dying in extream Age, I propheſy'd
That which is come to paſs, and did diſcern
From his Survivors I could nothing learn.
This long Diſcourſe was but to let you ſee,
That his long Life could not uneaſy be.
Few like the *Fabii* or the *Scipio*'s are,
Takers of Cities, Conquerors in War;
Yet others to like happy Age arrive,
Who modeſt, quiet, and with Virtue live:
Thus *Plato* writing his Philoſophy,
With Honour, after Ninety Years did die.
The *Athenian Story* writ at Ninety Four
By *Iſocrates*, who yet liv'd Five Years more;
His Maſter *Gorgias* at the Hundredth Year
And Seventh, not his Studies did forbear;
And ask'd, why he no ſooner left the Stage,
Said, he ſaw nothing to accuſe Old Age.
None but the Fooliſh, who their Lives abuſe
Age, of their own Miſtakes and Crimes accuſe,

All

All Common-wealths (as by Record is seen)
As by Age preserv'd, by Youth destroy'd have been.
When the Tragedian *Nævius* did demand,
Why did your Common-wealth no longer stand?
'Twas answer'd, that their Senators were new,
Foolish, and young, and such as nothing knew:
Nature to Youth hot Rashness doth dispence,
But with cold Prudence, Age doth recompence;
But Age ('tis said) will Memory decay,
So (if it be not exercis'd) it may;
Or, if by Nature it be dull, and slow;
Themistocles (when ag'd) the Names did know
Of all th'*Athenians*; and none grow so Old,
Not to remember where they hid their Gold.
From Age such Art of Memory we learn,
To forget nothing, which is our concern.
Their Interest no Priest, nor Sorcerer
Forgets, nor Lawyer, nor Philosopher;
No Understanding, Memory can want,
Where Wisdom studious Industry doth plant.
Nor does it only in the Active live,
But in the Quiet and Contemplative;
When *Sophocles* (who Plays, when aged wrote)
Was by his Sons before the Judges brought,
Because he paid the Muses such Respect,
His Fortune, Wife, and Children to neglect:
Almost condemn'd, he mov'd the Judges thus,
Hear, but instead of me, my *Oedipus*;
The Judges hearing with Applause, at th' end,
Freed him, and said no Fool such Lines had penn'd.
What Poets, and what Orators can I
Recount? What Princes in Philosophy?
Whose constant Studies with their Age did strive,
Nor did they those, tho' those did them survive.
Old Husbandmen I at *Sabinium* know,
Who for another Year, dig, plough, and sow:
For never any Man was yet so Old,
But hop'd his Life one Winter more might hold.

Cæcilius

Cæcilius vainly ſaid, each Day we ſpend,
Diſcovers ſomething, which muſt needs offend;
But ſometimes Age may pleaſant things behold,
And nothing that offends: He ſhould have told
This not to Age, but Youth, who oftner ſee
What not alone offends, but hurts, than we:
That, I in him, which he in Age condemn'd,
That us it renders odious, and contemn'd.
He knew not Vertue, if he thought this, Truth;
For Youth delights in Age, and Age in Youth.
What to the Old can greater Pleaſure be,
Than hopeful and ingenious Youth to ſee?
When they with Rev'rence follow where we lead,
And in ſtraight Paths by our Directions tread;
And even my Converſation here I ſee,
As well receiv'd by you, as yours by me.
'Tis diſingenious to accuſe our Age
Of Idleneſs, who all our Pow'rs ingage
In the ſame Studies, the ſame Courſe to hold,
Nor think our Reaſon for new Arts too old.
Solon the Sage his Progreſs never ceaſt,
But ſtill his Learning with his Days increaſt;
And I with the ſame greedineſs did ſeek
As (Water when I Thirſt) to ſwallow *Greek*;
Which I did only learn, that I might know
Thoſe great Examples which I follow now:
And I have heard that *Socrates* the Wiſe,
Learn'd on the Lute for his laſt Exerciſe;
Tho' many of the Antients did the ſame,
To improve Knowledge was my only Aim.

THE

The SECOND PART.

2. NOW int' our Second Grievance I muſt break,
That loſs of Strength makes Underſtanding weak.
I grieve no more my youthful Strength to want,
Than young, that of a Bull, or Elephant;
Then with that Force content, which Nature gave,
Nor am I now diſpleas'd with what I have.
When the young Wreſtlers at their Sport grew warm,
Old *Milo* wept, to ſee his naked Arm;
And cry'd, 'twas dead: Trifler, thine Heart, and Head,
And all that's in them (not thy Arm) are dead;
This Folly every Looker on derides,
To glory only in thy Arms and Sides.
Our gallant Anceſtors let fall no Tears,
Their Strength decreaſing by increaſing Years;
But they advanc'd in Wiſdom ev'ry Hour,
And made the Common-wealth advance in Power.
But Orators may grieve, for in their Sides,
Rather than Heads, their Faculty abides;
Yet I have heard old Voices loud and clear,
And ſtill my own ſometimes the Senate hear.
When th' Old with ſmooth and gentle Voices plead,
They by the Ear their well-pleas'd Audience lead:
Which, if I had not Strength enough to do,
I could (my *Lælius*, and my *Scipio*)
What's to be done, or not be done, inſtruct,
And to the Maxims of good Life conduct.
Cneius and *Publius Scipio*, and (that Man
Of Men) your Grandſire, the great *African*,
Were joyful, when the Flower of Noble Blood
Crowded their Dwellings, and Attending ſtood,
Like Oracles their Counſels to receive,
How in their Progreſs they ſhould act, and live.
And they whoſe high Examples, Youth obeys,
Are not deſpiſed, tho' their Strength decays;

And thoſe Decays (to ſpeak the naked Truth,
Tho' the Defects of Age) were Crimes of Youth.
Intemperate Youth (by ſad Experience found)
Ends in an Age imperfect, and unſound.
Cyrus, tho' ag'd (if *Xenophon* ſay true)
Lucius Metellus (whom when young I knew)
Who held (after his Second Conſulate)
Twenty Two Years the high Pontificate;
Neither of thoſe in Body, or in Mind,
Before their Death, the leaſt Decay did find.
I ſpeak not of my ſelf, tho' none deny
To Age (to praiſe their Youth) the liberty:
Such an unwaſted Strength I cannot boaſt,
Yet now my Years are Eighty Four almoſt:
And tho' from what it was my Strength is far,
Both in the Firſt and Second *Punick* War;
Nor at *Thermopylæ*, under *Glabrio*,
Nor when I Conſul into *Spain* did go;
But yet I feel no Weakneſs, nor hath length,
Or Winters, quite enervated my Strength;
And I, my Gueſt, my Client, or my Friend,
Still in the Courts of Juſtice can defend:
Neither muſt I that Proverb's Truth allow,
Who would be Antient, muſt be early ſo.
I would be youthful ſtill, and find no need
To appear Old, till I was ſo indeed.
And yet you ſee my Hours not idle are,
Tho' with your Strength I cannot mine compare.
Yet this *Centurion*'s doth yours ſurmount,
Not therefore him the better Man I count.
Milo, when entring the Olympick Game,
With a huge Ox upon his Shoulder came.
Would you the Force of *Milo*'s Body find?
Rather than of *Pythagoras*'s Mind?
The Force which Nature gives, with care retain,
But when decay'd, 'tis folly to complain;
In Age to wiſh for Youth is full as vain,
As for a Youth to turn a Child again.

Simple,

Simple, and certain Nature's ways appear,
As she sets forth the Seasons of the Year.
So in all Parts of Life we find her Truth,
Weakness to Childhood, Rashness to our Youth:
To elder Years to be Discreet and Grave,
Then to Old Age, Maturity she gave.
(Scipio) you know, how *Masinissa* bears
His kingly Port, at more than Ninety Years;
When marching with his Foot, he walks till Night;
When with his Horse, he never will alight;
Tho' cold, or wet, his Head is always bare;
So hot, so dry, his aged Members are.
You see how Exercise and Temperance,
Even to old Years, a youthful Strength advance.
Our Law (because from Age our Strength retires)
No Duty which belongs to Strength requires.
But Age doth many Men so feeble make,
That they no great Design can undertake;
Yet, that to Age not singly is apply'd,
But to all Man's Infirmities beside.
That *Scipio* (who adopted you) did fall
Into such Pains, he had no Health at all;
Who else had equall'd *Africanus* Parts,
Exceeding him in all the Liberal Arts.
Why should those Errors then imputed be
To Age alone, from which our Youth's not free?
Ev'ry Disease of Age we may prevent,
Like those of Youth, by being diligent.
When sick, such moderate Exercise we use,
And Diet, as our Vital Heat renews;
And if our Bodies thence Refreshment finds,
Then must we also exercise our Minds.
If with continual Oly we not supply
Our Lamp, the Light for want of it will die:
Tho' Bodies may be tir'd with Exercise,
No Weariness the Mind could e're surprise.
Cæcilius the Camedian, when of Age,
He represents the Follies on the Stage;

They're

They're Credulous, Forgetful, Diſſolute,
Neither thoſe Crimes to Age he doth impute;
But to old Men, to whom thoſe Crimes belong.
Luſt, Petulence, Raſhneſs, are in Youth more ſtrong
Than Age, and yet young Men thoſe Vices hate,
Who Virtuous are, Diſcreet, and Temperate:
And ſo what we call Dotage, ſeldom breeds
In Bodies, but where Nature ſow'd the Seeds.
There are five Daughters, and four gallant Sons,
In whom the Blood of Noble *Appius* runs,
With a moſt num'rous Family beſide;
Whom he alone, tho' old and blind, did guide.
Yet his clear-ſighted Mind was ſtill intent,
And to his Buſineſs, like a Bow, ſtood bent:
By Children, Servants, Neighbours, ſo eſteem'd,
He not a Maſter, but a Monarch ſeem'd.
All his Relations his Admirers were,
His Sons paid Reverence, and his Servants Fear:
The Order and the antient Diſcipline
Of *Romans*, did in all his Actions ſhine.
Authority (kept up) old Age ſecures,
Whoſe Dignity, as long as Life endures.
Something of Youth I in old Age approve,
But more the Marks of Age in Youth I love.
Who this obſerves, may in his Body find
Decrepid Age, but never in his Mind.
The Seven Volumes of my own Reports,
Wherein are all the Pleadings of our Courts.
All Noble Monuments of *Greece* are come
Unto my Hands, with thoſe of antient *Rome*.
The Pontifical, and the Civil Law,
I ſtudy ſtill, and thence Orations draw.
And to confirm my Memory, at Night,
What I hear, ſee, do, by Day, I ſtill Recite.
Theſe Exerciſes for my Thoughts I find,
Theſe Labours are the Chariots of my Mind.
To ſerve my Friends, the Senate I frequent,
And there what I before digeſted, vent.

Which only from my Strength of Mind proceeds,
Not any outward Force of Body needs:
Which, if I could not do, I ſhould delight,
On what I would, to ruminate at Night.
Who in ſuch Practices their Minds engage,
Nor fear, nor think of their approaching Age;
Which by degrees inviſibly doth creep:
Nor do we ſeem to die, but fall aſleep.

The THIRD PART.

3. NOW muſt I draw my Forces 'gainſt that Hoſt
Of Pleaſures, which i' th' Sea of Age are loſt.
Oh, thou moſt high tranſcendent Gift of Age!
Youth from its Folly thus to diſingage.
And now receive from me that moſt Divine
Oration of that Noble * *Tarentine*,
Which at *Tarentum* I long ſince did hear;
When I attended the Great *Fabius* there.
Yee Gods, was it Man's Nature, or his Fate,
Betray'd him with ſweet Pleaſure's poiſon'd Bait?
Which he, with all Deſigns of Art, or Power,
Doth with unbridled Appetite devour;
And as all Poiſons ſeek the nobleſt Part,
Pleaſure poſſeſſes firſt the Head and Heart;
Intoxicating both, by them, ſhe finds,
And burns the Sacred Temples of our Minds.
Furies, which Reaſon's Divine Chains had bound,
(That being broken) all the World confound.
Luſt, Murder, Treaſon, Avarice, and Hell
It ſelf broke looſe; in Reaſon's Palace dwell;
Truth, Honour, Juſtice, Temperance, are fled,
All her Attendants into Darkneſs led.
But why all this Diſcourſe? when Pleaſure's Rage
Hath conquer'd Reaſon, we muſt treat with Age.

* *Archytas* much praiſed by *Horace*.

Age

Age undermines, and will in Time ſurpriſe
Her ſtrongeſt Forts, and cut off all Supplies.
And join'd in League with ſtrong Neceſſity,
Pleaſure muſt fly, or elſe by Famine die.
Flaminius, whom a Conſulſhip had grac'd,
(Then Cenſor) from the Senate I diſplac'd;
When he in *Gaul* a Conſul, made a Feaſt,
A beautious Curteſan did him Requeſt,
To ſee the cutting off a Priſoner's Head;
This Crime I could not leave unpuniſhed,
Since by a private Villany he ſtain'd
That Publick Honour, which at *Rome* he gain'd.
Then to our Age (when not to Pleaſures bent)
This ſeems an Honour, not Diſparagement.
We, not all Pleaſures, like the *Stoicks* hate,
But love and ſeek thoſe which are moderate.
(Tho' Divine *Plato* thus of Pleaſures thought,
They us, with Hooks and Baits, like Fiſhes caught.)
When Quæſtor, to the Gods, in Publick Halls,
I was the firſt, who ſet up Feſtivals.
Not with high Taſtes our Appetites did Force,
But fill'd with Converſation and Diſcourſe;
Which Feaſts, *Convivial Meetings* we did Name.
Not like the Antient *Greeks*, who to their ſhame,
Call'd it a *Compotation*, not a Feaſt;
Declaring the worſt Part of it the beſt.
Thoſe Entertainments I did then frequent,
Sometimes with youthful Heat and Merriment:
But now (I thank my Age) which gives me eaſe
From thoſe Exceſſes; yet my ſelf I pleaſe
With cheerful Talk to entertain my Gueſts,
(Diſcourſes are to Age continual Feaſts)
The Love of Meat and Wine they Recompence,
And cheer the Mind, as much as thoſe the Senſe.
I'm not more pleas'd with gravity among
The Ag'd, than to be youthful with the Young;
Nor 'gainſt all Pleaſures proclaim open War,
To which, in Age, ſome Natural Motions are.

And ſtill at my *Sabinum* I delight
To treat my Neighbours till the depth of Night.
But we the Senſe and Guſt of Pleaſure want,
Which Youth at full poſſeſſes, this I grant;
But Age ſeeks not the Things which Youth requires,
And no Man needs that, which he not deſires.
When *Sophocles* was ask'd if he deny'd
Himſelf the Uſe of Pleaſures, he reply'd,
I humbly thank the Immortal Gods, who me
From that fierce Tyrant's Inſolence ſet free.
But they, whom preſſing Appetites conſtrain,
Grieve when they cannot their Deſires obtain.
Young Men the Uſe of Pleaſure underſtand,
As of an Object new, and near at Hand:
Tho' this ſtands more remote from Age's ſight,
Yet they behold it not without Delight:
As antient Soldiers from their Duties eas'd,
With Senſe of Honour and Rewards are pleas'd.
So from ambitious Hopes, and Luſts releaſt,
Delighted with it ſelf, our Age doth reſt.
No part of Life's more happy, when with Bread
Of antient Knowledge, and new Learning fed;
All youthful Pleaſures by degrees muſt ceaſe,
But thoſe of Age even with our Years increaſe.
We love not loaded Boards, and Goblets crown'd,
But free from Surfeits, our Repoſe is ſound.
When old *Frabitius* to the *Samnites* went
Ambaſſador from *Rome* to *Pyrrhus* ſent,
He heard a grave Philoſopher maintain,
That all the Actions of our Life were vain;
Which with our Senſe of Pleaſure not conſpir'd.
Fabritius the Philoſopher deſir'd,
That he to *Pyrrhus* would that Maxim teach,
And to the *Samnites* the ſame Doctrine preach;
Then of their Conqueſt he ſhould doubt no more,
Whom their own Pleaſures overcame before.
Now into ruſtick Matters I muſt fall,
Which Pleaſure ſeems to me the Chief of all.

Are

Age no Impediment to thoſe can give,
Who wiſely by the Rules of Nature live.
Earth (tho' our Mother) chearfully obeys
All the Commands her Race upon her lays.
For whatſoever from our Hand ſhe takes,
Greater, or leſs, a vaſt Return ſhe makes;
Nor am I only pleas'd with that Reſource,
But with her Ways, her Method, and her Force;
The Seed her Boſom (by the Plough made fit)
Receives, where kindly ſhe embraces it;
Which with her genuin Warmth, diffus'd, and ſpread,
Sends forth betimes a green and tender Head;
Then gives it Motion, Life, and Nouriſhment,
Which from the Root thro' Nerves and Veins are ſent:
Straight in a hollow Sheath upright it grows,
And, from receiving, doth it ſelf diſcloſe:
Drawn up in Ranks, and Files, the bearded Spikes
Guard it from Birds as with a Stand of Pikes.
When of the Vine I ſpeak, I ſeem inſpir'd,
And with Delight, as with her Juice am fir'd;
At Nature's God-like Power I ſtand amaz'd,
Which ſuch vaſt Bodies hath from Attoms rais'd.
The Kernel of a Grape, the Fig's ſmall Grain,
Can cloath a Mountain, and o'erſhade a Plain.
But thou (dear Vine) forbid'ſt me to be long,
Altho' thy Trunk be neither large, nor ſtrong;
Nor can thy Head (not help't) it ſelf ſublime,
Yet like a Serpent, a tall Tree can climb;
Whate'er thy many Fingers can intwine,
Proves thy Support, and all its Strength is thine;
Tho' Nature gave not Legs, it gave thee Hands,
By which thy Prop the proudeſt Cedar ſtands;
As thou haſt Hands, ſo hath thy Off-ſpring Wings,
And to the higheſt Part of Mortals ſprings;
But leſt thou ſhouldſt conſume thy Wealth in vain,
And ſtarve thy ſelf, to feed a numerous Train;
Or like the Bee (ſweet as thy Blood) deſign'd
To be deſtroy'd to propagate his Kind;

Leſt thy redundant, and ſuperfluous Juice,
Should fading Leaves inſtead of Fruits produce,
The Pruner's Hand, with letting Blood, muſt quench
Thy Heat, and thy exub'rant Parts retrench:
Then from the Joints of thy prolifick Stem
A ſwelling Knot is raiſed (call'd a Gem)
Whence, in ſhort ſpace it ſelf the Cluſter ſhews,
And from Earth's Moiſture, mix'd with Sun-beams, grows;
I'th' Spring, like Youth, it yields an acid Taſte,
But Summer doth, like Age, the ſourneſs waſte;
Then cloath'd with Leaves from Heat, and Cold ſecure,
Like Virgins, ſweet, and beauteous, when mature.
On Fruits, Flowers, Herbs, and Plants, I long could dwell,
At once to pleaſe my Eye, my Taſte, my Smell;
My Walks of Trees, all planted by my Hand,
Like Children of my own begetting, ſtand,
To tell the ſeveral Nature of each Earth,
What Fruits from each moſt properly take Birth;
And with what Arts to inrich every Mold,
The Dry to moiſten, and to warm the Cold.
But when we graft, or Buds inoculate,
Nature, by Art, we nobly meliorate:
As *Orpheus* Muſick wildeſt Beaſts did tame,
From the ſow'r Crab the ſweeteſt Apple came:
The Mother to the Daughter goes to School,
The Species changed, doth her Laws o'er-rule;
Nature her ſelf doth from her ſelf depart,
(Strange Tranſmigration) by the Power of Art,
How little Things, give Law to great, we ſee
The ſmall Bud captivates the greateſt Tree.
Here even the Power Divine we imitate,
And ſeem not to beget, but to create.
Much was I pleas'd with Fowls and Beaſts, the tame
For Food and Profit, the wild for Game.
Excuſe me when this pleaſant String I touch,
(For Age, of what delights it, ſpeaks too much)

Who,

Who, twice Victorious *Pyrrhus* conquered,
The *Sabines*, and the *Samnites* Captive led;
Great *Curius*, his remaining Days did ſpend,
And in this happy Life his Triumphs end.
My Farm ſtands near, and when I there retire,
His, and that Age's Temper I admire.
The *Samnites* Chiefs, as by his Fire he ſate,
With a vaſt Sum of Gold did on him wait,
Return, ſaid he, your Gold I nothing weigh,
When thoſe, who can command it, me obey:
This my Aſſertion proves, he may be Old,
And yet not Sordid, who refuſes Gold.
In Summer to ſit ſtill, or walk, I love,
Near a cool Fountain, or a ſhady Grove.
What can in Winter render more Delight,
Than the high Sun at Noon, and Fire at Night?
While our old Friends and Neighbours feaſt and play,
And with their harmleſs Mirth turn Night to Day,
Unpurchaſs'd Plenty our full Tables loads,
And part of what they lent, returns to our Gods.
That Honour and Authority which dwells
With Age, all Pleaſures of our Youth excels;
Obſerve, that I that Age have only prais'd
Whoſe Pillars were on Youth's Foundations rais'd,
And that (for which I great Applauſe receiv'd)
As a true Maxim hath been ſince believ'd.
That moſt unhappy Age great Pity needs,
Which to defend it ſelf, new Matter pleads:
Not from gray Hairs, Authority doth flow,
Nor from bald Heads, nor from a wrinkled Brow;
But our paſt Life, when virtuouſly ſpent,
Muſt to our Age thoſe happy Fruits preſent:
Thoſe things to Age moſt Honourable are,
Which eaſy, common, and but light appear;
Salutes, Conſulting, Compliment, Reſort,
Crowding Attendance to, and from the Court;
And not on *Rome* alone this Honour waits,
But on all Civil, and well-govern'd States.

Lyſander pleading in his City's praiſe,
From thence his ſtrongeſt Argument did raiſe,
That *Sparta* did with Honour, Age ſupport,
Paying them juſt Reſpect, at Stage and Court;
But at proud *Athens*, Youth did Age out-face,
Nor at the Plays would riſe, or give them Place:
When an *Athenian* Stranger of great Age,
Arriv'd at *Sparta*, climbing up the Stage,
To him the whole Aſſembly roſe, and ran
To place and eaſe this old and reverend Man,
Who thus his Thanks returns; the *Athenians* know
What's to be done, but what they know, not do.
Here our great Senate's Orders I may quote,
The firſt in Age is ſtill the firſt in Vote;
Nor Honour, nor high Birth, nor great Command,
In Competition with great Years may ſtand.
Why ſhould our Youth's ſhort tranſient Pleaſures dare
With Age's laſting Honours to compare?
On the World's Stage, when our Applauſe grows high,
For acting here, Life's Tragick Comedy;
The Lookers on will ſay we act not well,
Unleſs the laſt the former Scenes excel:
But Age is forward, uneaſy, ſcrutinous,
Hard to be pleas'd, and parcimonious;
But all thoſe Errors from our Manners riſe,
Not from our Years, yet ſome Moroſities
We muſt expect, ſince Jealouſy belongs
To Age, of Scorn, and tender Senſe of Wrongs;
Yet thoſe are mollify'd, or not diſcern'd,
Where Civil Arts and Manners have been learn'd:
So the Twins Humours, in our * *Terence* are
Unlike; this harſh and rude, that ſmooth and fair.
Our Nature here, is not unlike our Wine,
Some ſorts, when old, continue briſk, and fine:
So Age's Gravity may ſeem ſevere,
But nothing harſh, or bitter ought t'appear.

* In his Comedy call'd *Adelphi*.

Of

Of Age's Avarice I cannot ſee
What Colour, Ground, or Reaſon there ſhould be.
Is it not Folly, when the Way we ride
Is ſhort, for a long Voyage to provide?
To Avarice ſome Title, Youth may own,
To reap in Autumn, what the Spring had ſown;
And with the Providence of Bees, or Ants,
Prevents with Summer's Plenty, Winter's Wants:
But Age ſcarce ſows, till Death ſtands by to reap,
And to a Stranger's Hand transfers the Heap;
Affraid to be ſo once, ſhe's always Poor,
And to avoid a Miſchief, makes it ſure;
Such Madneſs, as for fear of Death to die,
Is, to be Poor, for fear of Poverty.

The FOURTH PART.

4. NOW againſt (that which terrifies our Age)
The laſt, and greateſt Grievance we engage;
To her, grim Death appears in all her Shapes,
The hungry Grave for her due Tribute gapes:
Fond, fooliſh Man! with Fear of Death ſurpriz'd,
Which either ſhould be wiſh'd for, or deſpis'd;
This, if our Souls with Bodies, Death deſtroy,
That, if our Souls a ſecond Life enjoy:
What elſe is to be fear'd, when we ſhall gain
Eternal Life, or have no Senſe of Pain;
The youngeſt in the Morning are not ſure,
That till the Night their Life they can ſecure;
Their Age ſtands more expos'd to Accidents
Than ours, nor common Cure their Fate prevents:
Death's Force (with Terror) againſt Nature ſtrives,
Nor one of many to ripe Age arrives.
From this ill Fate the World's Diſorders riſe,
For if all Men were Old they would be Wiſe;
Years and Experience, our Fore-fathers taught,
Them under Laws, and into Cities brought:

Why

Why only ſhould the Fear of Death belong
To Age, which is as common to the Young?
Your hopeful Brothers, and my Son, to you
(Scipio) and me, this Maxim makes too true;
But vigorous Youth may his gay Thoughts erect
To many Years, which Age muſt not expect;
But when he ſees his airy Hopes deceiv'd,
With Grief he ſays, who this would have believ'd?
We happier are than they, who but deſir'd
To poſſeſs that, which we long ſince acquir'd.
What if our Age to *Neſtor*'s could extend?
'Tis vain to think that laſting, which muſt end;
And when 'tis paſt, not any part remains
Thereof, but the Reward which Virtue gains.
Days, Months, and Years, like running Waters flow,
Nor what is paſt, nor what's to come we know;
Our Date, how ſhort ſoe'er, muſt us content.
When a good Actor doth his Part preſent,
In ev'ry Act he our Attention draws,
That at the laſt he may find juſt Applauſe;
So (tho' but ſhort) yet we muſt learn the Art
Of Virtue, on this Stage to act our Part:
True Wiſdom muſt our Actions ſo direct,
Not only the laſt Plaudite to expect;
Yet grieve no more tho' long that Part ſhould laſt,
Than Husbandmen, becauſe the Spring is paſt;
The Spring, like Youth, freſh Bloſſoms doth produce,
But Autumn makes them ripe, and fit for uſe:
So Age a mature Mellowneſs doth ſet
On the green Promiſes of youthful Heat.
All things which Nature did ordain, are good,
And ſo muſt be receiv'd, and underſtood:
Age, like ripe Apples, on Earth's Boſom drops,
Whil'ſt Force our Youth, like Fruits, untimely crops;
The ſparkling Flame of our warm Blood expires,
As when huge Streams are pour'd on raging Fires;
But Age, unforc'd, falls by her own Conſent,
As Coals to Aſhes, when the Spirits ſpent;

There-

Therefore to Death I with ſuch Joy reſort,
As Seamen from a Tempeſt to their Port;
Yet to that Port our ſelves we muſt not force,
Before our Pilot, Nature, ſteers our Courſe:
Let us the Cauſes of our Fear condemn,
Then Death, at his Approach, we ſhall contemn;
Tho' to our Heat of Youth our Age ſeems cold,
Yet when reſolv'd, it is more brave and bold.
Thus *Solon* to *Piſiſtratus* reply'd,
Demanded, on what Succour he rely'd,
When with ſo few he boldly did ingage,
He ſaid, he took his Courage from his Age.
Then Death ſeems welcome, and our Nature kind,
When leaving us a perfect Senſe and Mind;
She (like a Workman in his Science skill'd)
Pulls down with eaſe, what her own Hand did build.
That Art which knew to join all Parts in one,
Makes the leaſt violent Separation.
Yet tho' our Ligaments betimes grow weak,
We muſt not force them till themſelves they break.
Pythag'ras bids us in our Station ſtand,
Till God our General ſhall us disband.
Wiſe *Solon* dying, wiſh'd his Friends might grieve,
That in their Memories he ſtill might live.
Yet wiſer *Ennius* gave command to all
His Friends, not to bewail his Funeral;
Your Tears for ſuch a Death in vain you ſpend,
Which ſtraight in Immortality ſhall end.
In Death, if there be any Senſe of Pain,
But a ſhort ſpace, to Age it will remain.
On which, without my Fears, my Wiſhes wait,
But timorous Youth on this ſhould meditate:
Who for light Pleaſure this Advice rejects,
Finds little, when his Thoughts he recollects.
Our Death (tho' not its certain Date) we know,
Nor whether it may be this Night, or no:
How then can they contented live, who fear
A Danger certain, and none knows how near?

They

They err, who for the Fear of Death diſpute,
Our gallant Actions this Miſtake confute.
Thee (*Brutus*) *Rome*'s firſt Martyr I muſt Name,
The *Curtii* bravely div'd the Gulph of Flame:
Attilius ſacrific'd himſelf, to ſave
That Faith, which to his barb'rous Foes he gave;
With the two *Scipio*'s did thy Uncle fall,
Rather to fly from Conquering *Hannibal.*
The great *Marcellus* (who reſtored *Rome*)
His greateſt Foes with Honour did intomb.
Their Lives, how many of our Legions threw,
Into the Breach, whence no return they knew?
Muſt then the Wiſe, the Old, the Learned fear,
What not the Rude, the Young, th'Unlearn'd forbear
Satiety from all things elſe doth come,
Then Life muſt to it ſelf grow weariſome.
Thoſe Trifles wherein Children take delight,
Grow nauſeous to the young Man's Appetite;
And from thoſe Gaieties our Youth requires,
To exerciſe their Minds, our Age retires.
And when the laſt Delights of Age ſhall die,
Life in its ſelf will find Satiety.
Now you (my Friends) my Senſe of Death ſhall hear,
Which I can well deſcribe, for he ſtands near.
Your Father *Lælius*, and yours, *Scipio*,
My Friends, and Men of Honour, I did know;
As certainly as we muſt die, they live
That Life which juſtly may that Name receive.
Till from theſe Priſons of our Fleſh releas'd,
Our Souls with heavy Burdens lie oppreſs'd;
Which part of Man from Heaven falling down,
Earth in her low Abyſs doth hide and drown.
A Place ſo dark to the Cæleſtial Light,
And pure, Eternal Fire's quite oppoſite.
The God's thro' Humane Bodies did diſperſe
An heavenly Soul, to guide this Univerſe;
That Man, when he of heavenly Bodies ſaw
The Order, might from thence a Pattern draw:

Nor this to me did my own Dictates ſhow,
But to the old Philoſophers I owe.
I heard *Pythagoras*, and thoſe who came
With him, and from our Country took their Name;
Who never doubted but the Beams divine
Deriv'd from Gods, in Mortal Breaſts did ſhine.
Nor from my Knowledge did the Antients hide
What *Socrates* declar'd, the Hour he dy'd;
Be th' Immortality of Souls proclaim'd,
(Whom th' Oracle of Men the wiſeſt nam'd)
Why ſhould we doubt of that, whereof our Senſe
Finds Demonſtration from Experience;
Our Minds are here and there, below, above;
Nothing that's Mortal can ſo ſwiftly move.
Our Thoughts to future things their Flight direct,
And in an inſtant all that's paſt collect;
Reaſon, Remembrance, Wit, inventive Art,
No Nature, but Immortal, can impart.
Man's Soul in a perpetual Motion flows,
And to no outward Cauſe that Motion owes;
And therefore, that no End can overtake,
Becauſe our Minds cannot themſelves forſake.
And ſince the Matter of our Soul is pure,
And ſimple, which no Mixture can endure,
Of Parts, which not among themſelves agree,
Therefore it never can divided be.
And Nature ſhews (without Philoſophy)
What cannot be divided, cannot die.
We even in early Infancy diſcern,
Knowledge is born with Babes before they learn;
Ere they can ſpeak, they find ſo many Ways
To ſerve their Turn, and ſee more Arts than Days.
Before their Thoughts they plainly can expreſs,
The Words and Things they know are numberleſs;
Which Nature only, and no Art could find,
But what ſhe taught before, ſhe call'd to mind.
This to his Sons (as *Xenophon* Records)
Of the great *Cyrus*, were the dying Words;

" Fear not when I depart (nor therefore mourn)
" I ſhall be no where, or to nothing turn:
" That Soul, which gave me Life, was ſeen by non
" Yet by the Actions it deſign'd, was known;
" And though its Flight no Mortal Eye ſhall ſee,
" Yet know, for ever it the ſame ſhall be.
" That Soul, which can Immortal Glory give,
" To her own Virtues muſt for ever live.
" Can you believe that Man's all-knowing Mind,
" Can to a Mortal Body be confin'd?
" Tho' a foul, fooliſh Priſon her immure
" On Earth, ſhe (when eſcap'd) is wiſe, and pure.
" Man's Body when diſſolv'd is but the ſame
" With Beaſts, and muſt return from whence it came
" But whence into our Bodies, Reaſon flows,
" None ſees it, when it comes, or where it goes.
" Nothing reſembles Death ſo much as Sleep,
" Yet then our Minds themſelves from Slumber keep
" When from their fleſhly Bondage they are free,
" Then what Divine, and future Things they ſee?
" Which makes it moſt apparent whence they are
" And what they ſhall hereafter be declare.
This Noble Speech the dying *Cyrus* made.
Me (*Scipio*) ſhall no Argument perſwade,
Thy Grandſire and his Brother, to whom Fame
Gave from two conquer'd Parts o'th' World, their
Name;
Nor thy Great Grandſire, nor thy Father *Paul*,
Who fell at *Cannæ* againſt *Hannibal*;
Nor I (for 'tis permitted to the Ag'd
To boaſt their Actions) had ſo oft engag'd
In Battels, and in Pleadings, had we thought,
That only Fame our Virtuous Actions bought;
'Twere better in ſoft Pleaſure and Repoſe,
Inglorioufly our peaceful Eyes to cloſe:
Some high Aſſurance hath poſſeſs'd my Mind,
After my Death, an happier Life to find.

Unleſs

Unleſs our Souls from the Immortals came,
What end have we to ſeek Immortal Fame?
All Virtuous Spirits ſome ſuch Hope attends,
Therefore the Wiſe his Days with Pleaſure ends.
The Fooliſh and Short-ſighted, die with fear,
That they go no where, or they know not where.
The Wiſe and Virtuous Soul with clearer Eyes,
Before ſhe parts, ſome happy Port diſcries.
My Friends, your Fathers I ſhall ſurely ſee,
Nor only thoſe I lov'd, or who lov'd me;
But ſuch as before ours did end their Days,
Of whom we hear, and read, and write their Praiſe.
This I believe, for were I on my Way,
None ſhould perſwade me to return, or ſtay:
Should ſome God tell me, that I ſhould be born,
And cry again, his Offer I ſhould ſcorn;
Aſham'd when I have ended well my Race,
To be led back to my firſt Starting-place.
And ſince with Life we are more griev'd than joy'd,
We ſhould be either ſatisfy'd, or cloy'd;
Yet will not I my length of Days deplore,
As many Wiſe and Learn'd have done before:
Nor can I think ſuch Life in vain is lent,
Which for our Country and our Friends is ſpent.
Hence from an Inn, not from my Home, I paſs,
Since Nature meant us here no Dwelling-Place.
Happy when I from this Turmoil ſet free;
That peaceful and divine Aſſembly ſee:
Not only thoſe I nam'd, I there ſhall greet,
But my own gallant Virtuous *Cato* meet.
Nor did I weep, when I to Aſhes turn'd,
His belov'd Body, who ſhould mine have burn'd,
But in my Thoughts beheld his Soul aſcend,
Where his fix'd Hopes our Interview attend:
Then ceaſe to wonder that I feel no Grief
From Age, which is of my Delights the Chief.
My Hope's, if this Aſſurance hath deceiv'd,
That I Man's Soul Immortal have believ'd)

And if I err, no Power ſhall diſpoſſeſs
My Thoughts of that expected Happineſs.
Tho' ſome minute Philoſophers pretend,
That with our Days our Pains and Pleaſures end.
If it be ſo, I hold the ſafer ſide,
For none of them my Error ſhall deride.
And if hereafter no Rewards appear,
Yet Virtue hath it ſelf rewarded here.
If thoſe who this Opinion have deſpis'd,
And their whole Life to Pleaſure ſacrific'd;
Should feel their Error, they when undeceiv'd,
Too late will wiſh, that me they had believ'd.
If Souls no Immortality obtain,
'Tis fit our Bodies ſhould be out of Pain.
The ſame Uneaſineſs which every Thing
Gives to our Nature, Life muſt alſo bring.
Good Acts (if long) ſeem tedious, ſo is Age,
Acting too long, upon this Earth, her Stage.
Thus much for Age, to which when you arrive,
That Joy to you, which it gives me, 'twill give.

FINIS.